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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY **Romania**

SUBJECT **Taxi Cabs, Private Trucks, Motorcycles, Bicycles,
Private Cars/Driving Licenses, Plates, etc.**

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THIS IS **UNEVALUATED** INFORMATION

1. "Taxi Cabs: All taxi cabs in Bucharest are private. There is no co-operative for taxi drivers, nor have drivers been organized in any other way. By law issued by the CMOB Headquarters of the Bucharest City Militia (through the Directia Serviciului Circulatiei, or DSC - the Directorate of Traffic Control Service), taxi cabs may make trips within the capital, up to, and not exceeding, the so-called 'Linia de Cintura' or 'Linia Porturilor' (City Limits). Taxis may exceed those limits only if the car and driver have been hired by a State Institution - even for a single trip. For this, the cab driver needs a special permit, issue of which is made by the DSC or the CMOB, as per written and official request made by the interested State Institution. The permit is issued for both cab-driver and car.
2. "Now the old system of automatic tariff taxation and automatic apparatus /sic, has been completely abolished. There are no official or approved cab fares; prices are agreed upon by the cab-driver and client. Thus, prices are high. There are very few taxi cabs in Bucharest, and it is a real problem for a cab-driver to keep his car in good running condition. The total lack of spare parts is the problem: drivers often must perform miracles to repair their vehicles. The appearance of these cabs cannot be described; they are usually a combination of makes. Tires are usually purchased through the black market, prices depending on the condition of the tire. In general, a black market tire ranges, in price, from 700-1500 lei. When a cab and driver have been hired by a State Institution, the owner of the vehicle benefits: since the Institution concerned needs a car in good running condition (particularly for trips beyond the city limits) it undertakes to supply the vehicle with good tires (especially if it is going to be used for two

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or three months time). In this case, the Institution issues the cab-driver a declaration stating that the vehicle and driver have been hired for the use of the Institution, and requesting that the driver be issued a permit to purchase tires in State Stores, at official prices. This declaration is taken by the cab-driver to the local City Sector People's Board, Local Industry Section, for registration; and, after receiving the final approval of the Commerce Section of the same City Sector People's Board, the cab-driver may purchase tires from the I.C.S. Ferometal State Store, located opposite the former Jalea Shop (nowadays also an I.C.S. Ferometal State Store) at Sf. Gheorghe on Blv. 1848 (formerly Coltei). The official price for a new tire, brand unknown, is 550 lei.

3. "Cabs cannot be called by phone; taxi cabs for hire may be found, particularly, in the following places:
 - a. Main Railway Station, and Eastern Railway Station.
 - b. In front of the C.C.A. (Casa Centrala a Armatei - Central House of the Army, formerly Cercul Militar) on Victoriei Street.
 - c. Natiei Square, in front of the meat market.
 - d. In front of the Central People's Board of the City (parked on Bursei Street).
 - e. Near the Athene Palace
 - f. Near the Ambassador Hotel
 - g. In general, near all markets (Obor Market, 1 May Market, etc.)
4. "While it is rather difficult to estimate fares, normally they are as follows:
 - a. From the city center (say, Balcescu Square) to the Northern Railway Station: approximately 40 lei
 - b. From the city suburbs (say, Grand Bridge on Grivitei Street), to Balcescu Square: approximately 60 lei
5. "Gasoline is purchased by the drivers, from the Competroil distributing centers in Bucharest, without coupons, at the rate of 3.00 lei per liter.
6. "It is generally known that there are MSS informers among cab drivers. These informers are ordered to report:
 - a. Conversations of political, commercial or subversive nature.
 - b. Transporting of goods from one place to another, (in order to prevent black market sale.)
7. "The use of a taxi cab may attract the attention of authorities. (This is not true when a cab is used from home to the railway station, and vice versa). The use of a cab by an ordinary citizen raises immediate suspicion. A taxi ride from a cinema, restaurant, etc., to a home might be questioned if the driver reported it to his superiors. If such a ride was questioned, the investigation would be handled very discreetly and quietly, but might culminate, later, in the arrest of the passenger.
8. "Private Cars: Nowadays, the only category of person still owning a car, includes doctors, artists, writers, etc. Doctors have a special sign on the front and rear windows of their vehicles; it is a (home-made) red cross. All Patra (GSR) post-engine cars, are MSS vehicles. They have the same kind of plates as do private vehicles, and are either gray or black.

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9. "Private Trucks: At the end of 1952, all Rumanian-Soviet enterprises (SOVROM), were abolished. They were replaced by similar organizations whose names do not include the 'SOV' designation. Now there is the Competrol (attached to the Ministry of Mines and Petrol, on Victoriei Street, in the former Banlock Building), and the Comtransport (attached to the Ministry of Construction). So far, the State has not nationalized private owned trucks, nor is there any indication that this will occur in the future. To the contrary, the State definitely does not hinder truck owners, since it needs their services. The State is completely unable to manufacture and supply spare parts. If all vehicles were nationalized, the State would be faced with these problems:

- a. Maintenance of all vehicles.
- b. Employment of qualified personnel to keep record of vehicles, etc.
- c. Procurement of spare parts, and payment of drivers even when a vehicle became unusable.

So, the State has left truck owners with the illusion of independent ownership, taxed them heavily, and continued to use their services. Truck owners, aware of their non-expendability, have succeeded in gaining certain rights

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effective 1953, payment for the services of a truck owner, is made directly by the State Institution concerned, to the driver, in cash, twice monthly, through the Institution's Cash Office. Moreover, truck owners get gasoline coupons (paying 1.00 lei per liter for gas), and authorization for the purchase of tires at official prices.

11. "A very rigid control ensures that both the State Institution employing the truck and driver, and the owner himself, pay duty-taxes. Every truck is issued a special registry by the Local Industry Section of the City Sector People's Board; the registry contains all data on the individual and the vehicle. The State Institution using the truck, has to register all data pertaining to trips made (dates, distances, etc.) and payments. Payments are made every 15 days, and recorded in three copies; one copy is kept in the Institution's files; the second copy also remains with the Institution, and records deduction of taxes automatically paid to the Finance Section of the People's Board, at the time the driver is paid; the third copy remains with the registry, in possession of the truck owner. The copy remaining with the owner serves as a control for the Finance Sections of the People's Boards (at the end of the year) with the final determination of other taxes. Transportation of goods and duty taxes paid by a truck owner, are directly proportionate to the weight of the truck. Below are two examples of tax calculation:

- a. A truck weighing 150 kg. was paid 12 lei per hour. Over a month's time, this truck could average 10 hours of work per day for 20 days. Therefore, the owner of the truck could make as much as 2,400 lei per month. At the time of payment, 25% of this amount was deducted for duty-taxes, netting the owner 1,800 lei.
- b. A truck weighing 300 kg. was paid 10 lei per hour. The following table shows the amount paid for a month. 20 days a month. The net amount for a month is 11,700 lei a month. Gross amount paid is 14,625 lei a month. The owner pays a 40% duty-tax on the gross amount, or 5,850 lei a month.

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12. "Monthly incomes of truck owners are undoubtedly higher than those of the average State employee, or common citizens. On the other hand, repairs and maintenance of trucks are financed by the owner (who has them done at the privately owned 'Ateliere Mecanice' Mechanics Workshops, which provide the sole hope for repairs). A net income of 7000 to 10000 lei per month represents a very high income, but the State does not worry about it, knowing that sooner or later the owner of a truck will have to pay a fortune for a spare part or repairs. Truck owners are considered to be in the same category as private business men (as far as rents, etc. are concerned). They are not entitled to food ration cards, or any other privileges given the State employee caste. Truck owners usually drive their own trucks; very seldom does anyone own two trucks, as this would involve the hiring of a driver, and heavier taxation as well. The principle satisfaction of truck driving, besides the financial advantage, is independence: truck owners and drivers need have no political ties, need not attend political meetings (as employees of the State must do), and may work for whatever State Institution they wish. In the recent past, many have tried to become truck owners and drivers, but new permits are no longer issued. There is a semilegal way to get around this problem, however: since driving licenses are issued only to persons within the field of labor, (as per request made by a State Institution), an employee owning a license, dismissed from a State Institution (in which case his driving license is not taken from him), may find someone interested in entering a profitable activity; one person supplies funds for the truck; the other person supplies the driving license. Hence, a partnership is formed, which, though less profitable than independent truck ownership, is still more lucrative than most other occupations.
13. "Nowadays, in the courtyards of various Bucharest houses, one can observe people constructing a truck, or even a tanker (for transporting diesel oil for the central heating system of ILL administered houses, from the Competroil) with parts from old trucks and cars of all makes.
14. "Driving Licenses and Traffic Licenses - Plates - Motorcycles and Bicycles: For every vehicle except a bicycle, the following documents are required:
- a. Carnet de Conducere (driving license), for the driver.
 - b. Carnet de Circulatie (Circulation or Traffic Permit), for the vehicle.
 - c. Carnet Fiscal (Fiscal Card) for the vehicle.

The first one, above, is issued by the Rata or 'Regia Autonoma Autocamioane' (Autonomous Body for Truck or Car Transportation), located on Mihai Bravu Street, opposite the Obor Market. However, nowadays, private citizens cannot apply for a driving license; only when a State Institution sends one of its employees to 'Rata' to take a course for a driving license can one be obtained. Driving licenses are of three classes: I, motorcycles; II, cars; and III, trucks. The training course lasts for one month, and payment is made by the Institution needing the services of the driver. Upon completion of the course, the new driver is issued a driving license, and begins driving for the Institution. The second one (the Circulation or Traffic Permit) is issued by the BSC or the CMOP and must accompany a vehicle at all times. The third one (Fiscal Card), is issued by the Financial Section of the City Sector People's Board concerned, and is proof that the owner of a vehicle has paid all taxes applicable.

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15. "Anyone may purchase a motorcycle or bicycle. Formalities for ownership of a bicycle are very simple: with the purchase bill, the owner receives, immediately, (from the DSC of the CMOB), a Circulation Permit and a plate number; in addition, he gets a Fiscal Card from the Finance Section of the People's Board. For a motorcycle, the situation changes: the purchase can be made, but the owner cannot drive the motorcycle unless he has a driver's license.
16. "As regards Rumanian citizens in Bucharest, Traffic Control Militia and other Militia men control vehicular traffic. They check licenses to see if all taxes have been paid, and to see whether the Traffic Permit is still valid. No special permit is required of a Rumanian bicycle or motorcycle driver crossing the capital's boundaries; he may even go to Stalin (Brasov). At the city limits there are no blocks erected. There is, however, a Traffic Control Militia to register numbers of all vehicles crossing. All vehicles departing from Bucharest for unknown destinations are booked; and plates of all incoming vehicles are registered. A check is obviously made later. Along the road, the Traffic Control Militia undertakes the same checks as were made in the capital. A similar registration takes place at the boundaries of the major towns. In the summer of 1953, all vehicle plates were changed

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